

DALTON: Current Conditions and Future Decisions



Welcome

- Our Purpose: Create a blueprint to balance future development & conservation
- Bonus: The plan will increase the town's eligibility for state grants
- Purpose for tonight's meeting: Vision for what Dalton will look like in 20 yrs
- Tonight:
 - Summarize existing conditions & trends
 - Summarize your needs via the survey
 - Hear from you what your desires are for Dalton's future

Acknowledgment of Financial Support



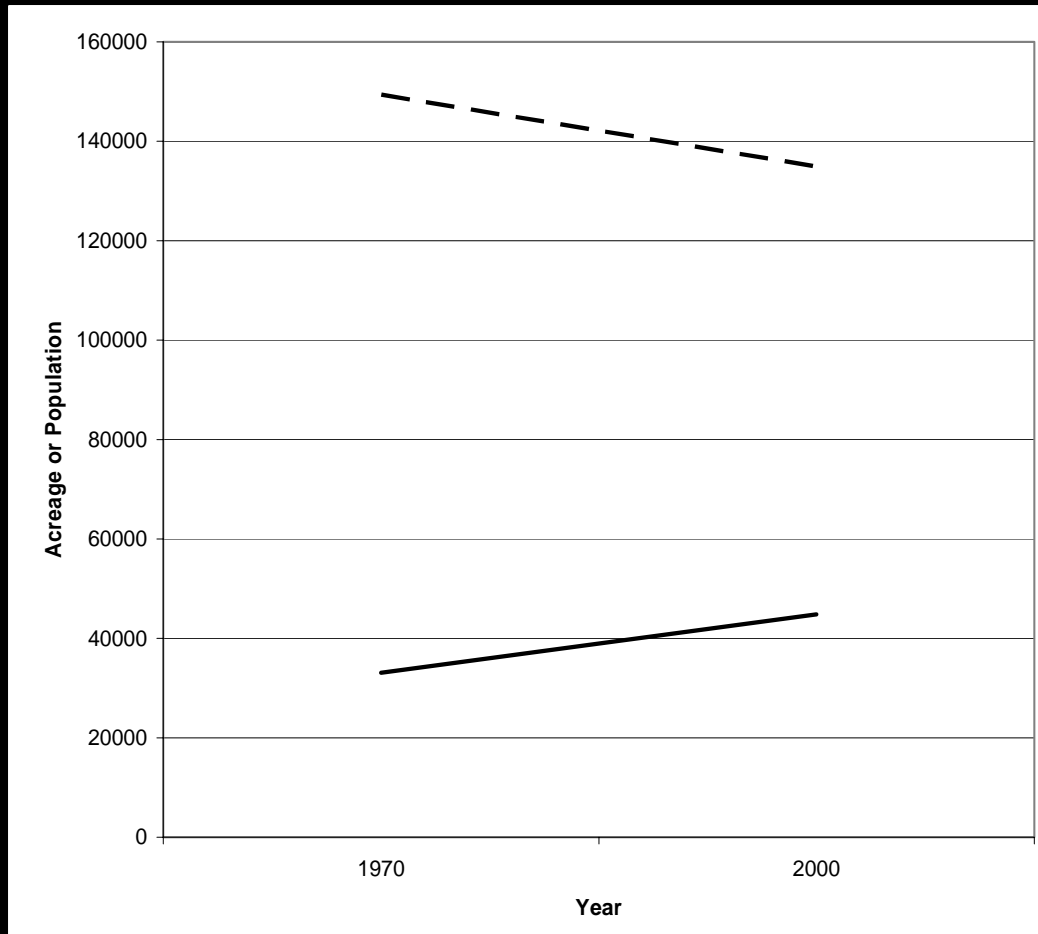
Finances

- In 2001, Dalton had the second highest tax rate in Berkshire County
- Ranked 7th in highest avg. tax bill
- Avg. single-family tax bill
 - 2001- \$2,231
 - 2003 - \$2,465

Tax Facts & Myths: Cost of Community Service Ratios



Berkshire County Population & Residential Acreage Trends



1970-2000

**Population
Down 11%**

**Res. Acreage
Up 32%**

Why Increased Acreage?

- Large lots, large homes
- Smaller family size
- Car habitat – garages, driveways
- Seasonal homes
 - Stock market less reliable
 - 911
 - Berkshires near metro areas

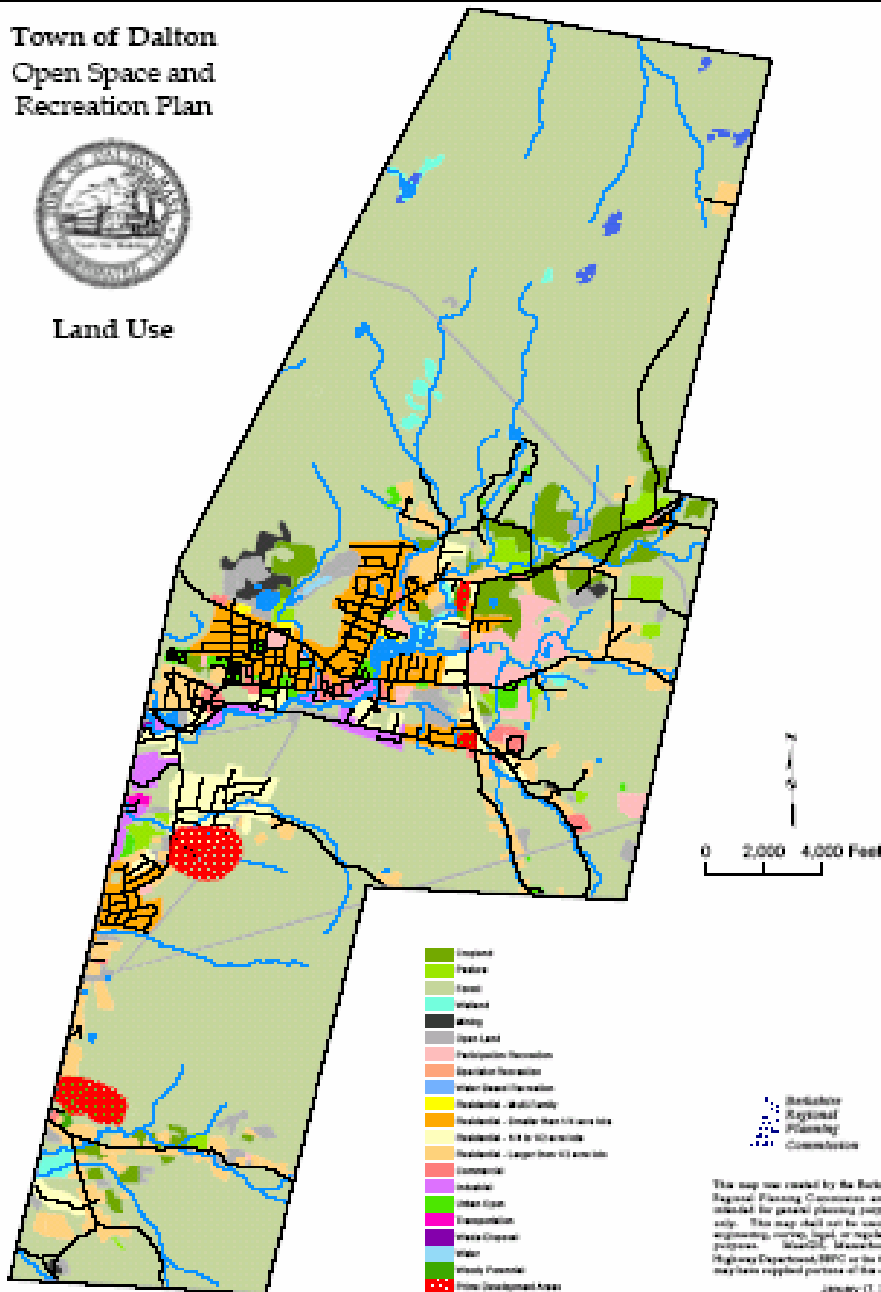
Development Trends in Dalton



Town of Dalton
Open Space and
Recreation Plan



Land Use

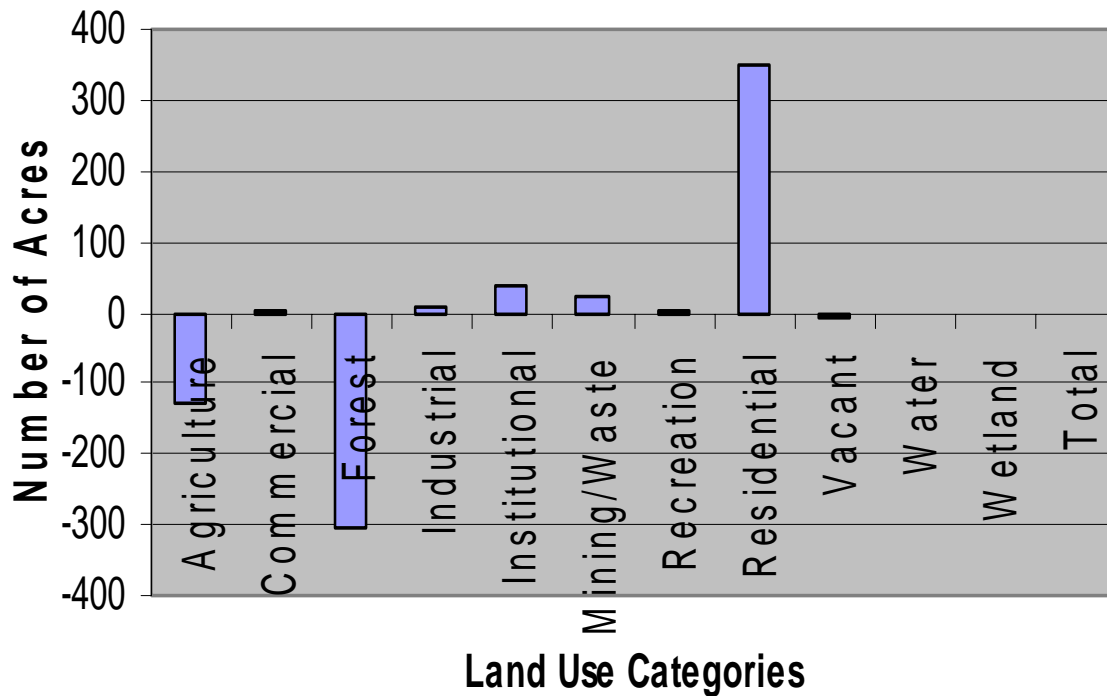


Development Trends



Notable Changes in Land Use

Land Use Changes in Dalton 1971-1999



Land Use Category	Change (acres) 1971-99
Agriculture	-129
Commercial	0
Forest	-296
Industrial	10
Institutional	37
Mining/Waste	23
Recreation	0
Residential	351
Vacant	-5
Water	0
Wetland	0
Total	0

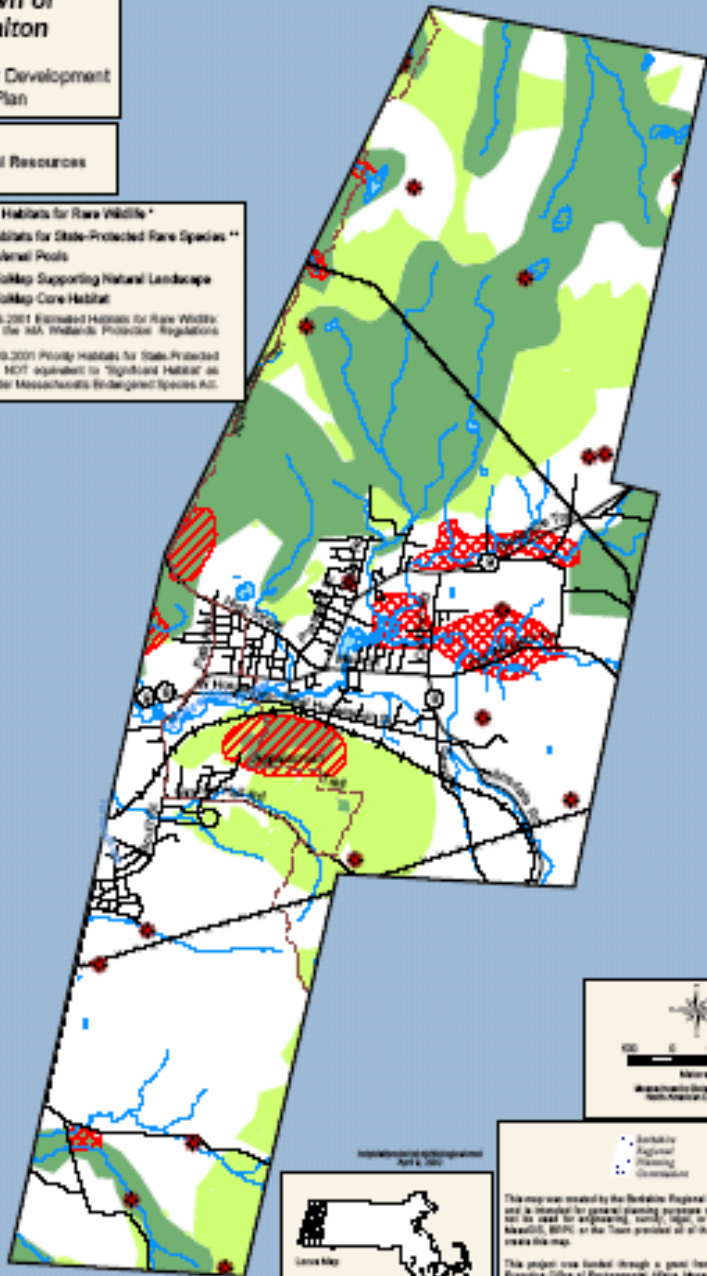
1999-2004: Dalton gained 6-16 new dwellings per year

Town of Dalton

Community Development Plan

Biological Resources

- Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife *
 - Priority Habitats for State-Protected Rare Species **
 - Potential Vernal Pools
 - NHESP Biomap Supporting Natural Landscape
 - NHESP Biomap Core Habitat
- * 1995/97 1998/2001 Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife For Use with the MA Wetlands Protection Regulations (310 CMR 10.00)
- ** NHESP 1999/2001 Priority Habitats for State-Protected Rare Species. NOT equivalent to "Significant Habitat" as designated under Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.



This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map should not be used for engineering, zoning, legal, or regulatory purposes. MA0101, 00194 or the Town printer of all the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Planning, Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

Significant Natural Resources



Significant Natural Resources

- **Habitat**

- American Bitterns
- Wood Turtles
- Spring Salamanders
- Rich Mesic Forests
- 19 potential vernal pools
- Unfragmented forest provides large area and supports biodiversity

- **Corridors**

- Eastern Veined White Butterfly

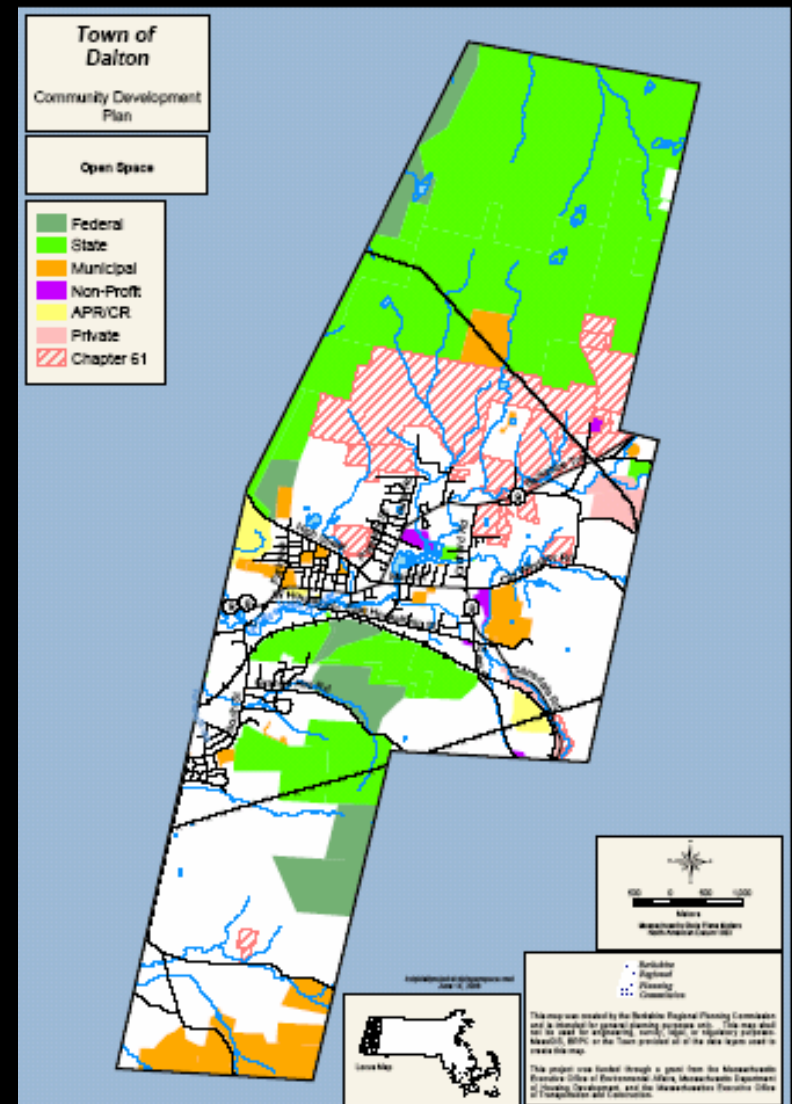
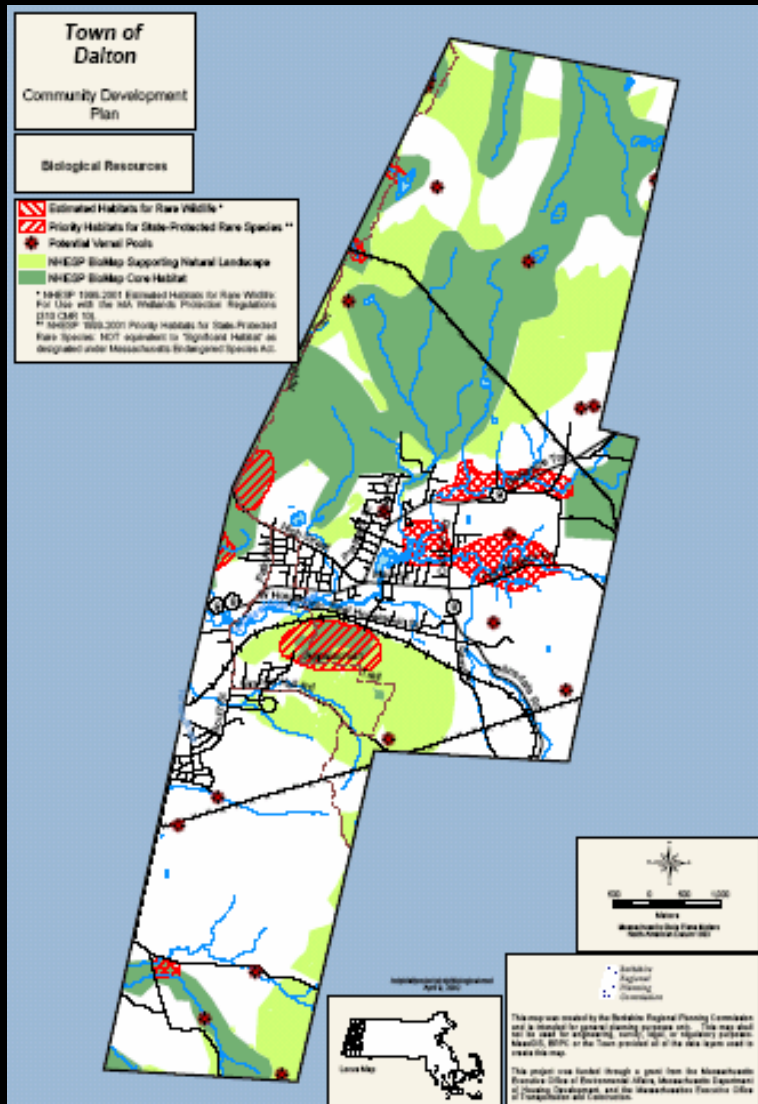


Land Protected from Development

Ownership	Acres Permanent Protection	Level of Protection
Federal	757	High
State	4,659	High
Town of Dalton (town forest, parks, cems.)	359	Medium
City of Pittsfield	374	Medium
Conservation Restriction (APR, CR)	133	High
Non-profit (Boy Scouts, Am. Legion, etc)	54	Low
Chapter 61 Program	1,453	Low
Total Acres*	7,789	

- **56% of open land has some level of protection**
- **45% of land is permanently protected**

Protecting Areas of Ecological Importance



Recreational Opportunities

Well Known

- AT
- North Mountain
- Day Mountain
- Wahconah Falls
- The Boulders
- Town parks
- CRA

Less Well Known

- Housatonic River
 - Canoe/kayak
 - New river trail
- Downtown tour
- Others?

Public Survey

- ~3,000 surveys distributed
- 171 surveys returned (6%)
- Advantages
 - Rural Nature (151 responses)
 - Schools (118)
 - Recreation (116)
- Disadvantages:
 - Tax Rate (108 responses)

Your Views on New Development

- Majority like the way things are, with some new commercial development
- Where should new housing be located?
 - 2/3 want it near existing development or along existing roadways

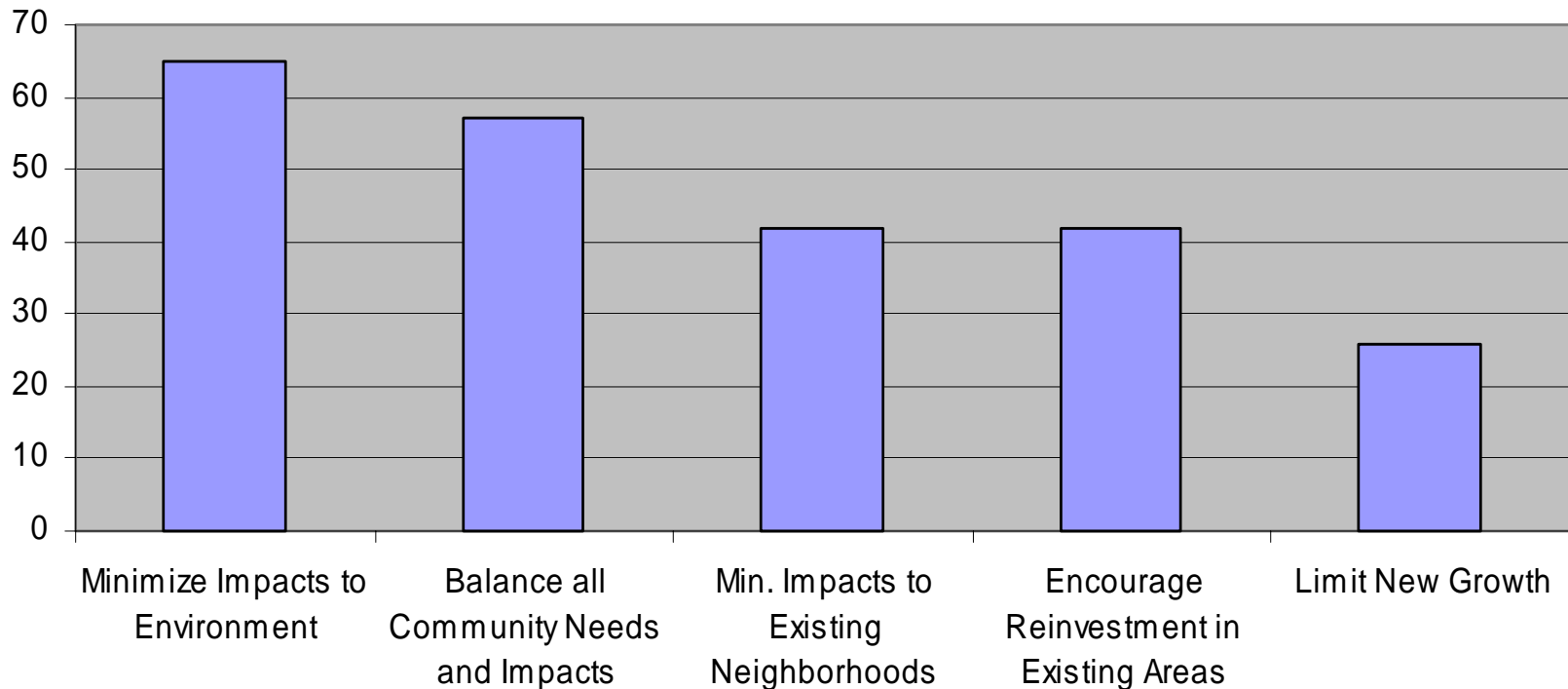
Your Views on Conservation

- Town should play active role in preserving open space and recreation (144 responses, 88%)
- Favor limiting development on hillsides (117 responses, 72%)
- Vast majority of respondents not aware of conservation options



Your Views, cont.

Regarding New Development, town officials should strive to:



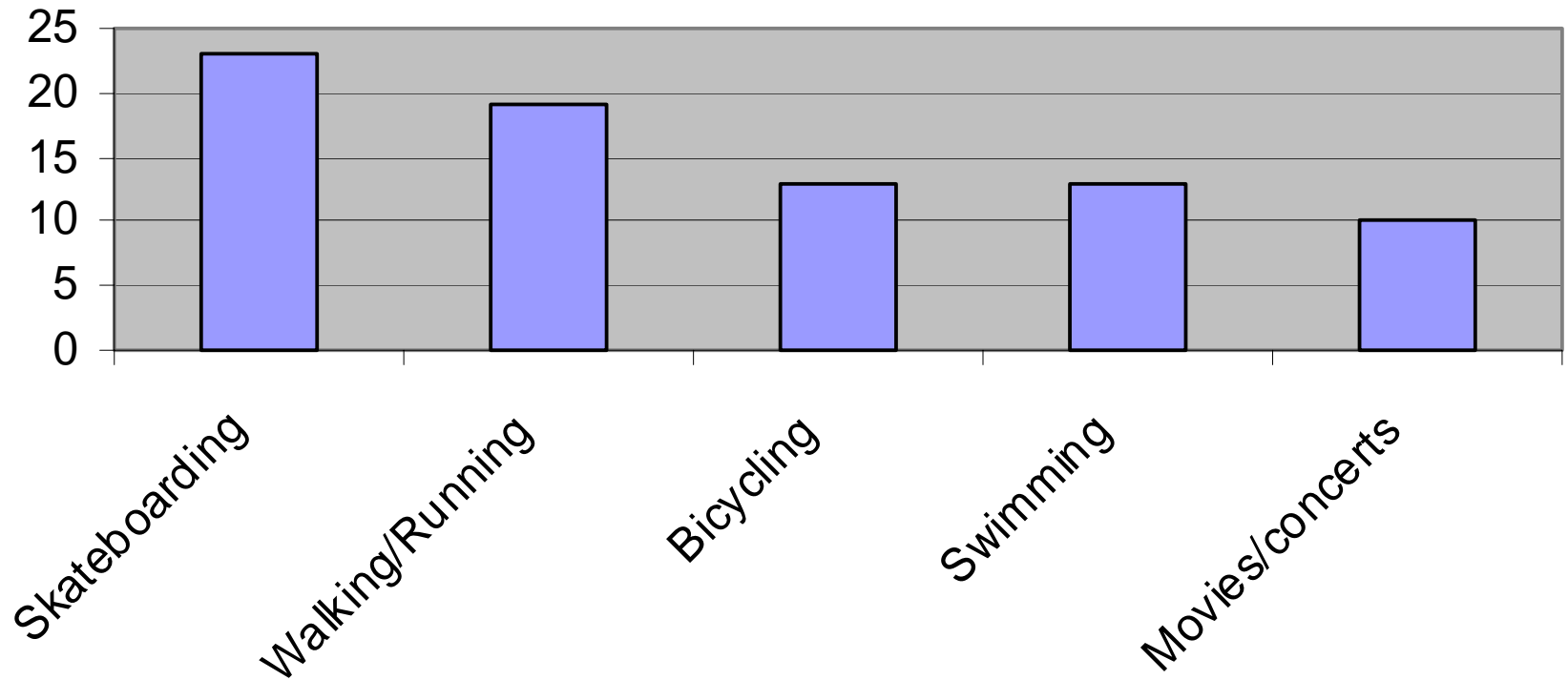
Your Views on Recreation

- Walking/running is by far most popular activity
- Town should designate more areas for open space and recreation (75%)
- Town should investigate reuse of landfill for recreation(72%)
- Current facilities adequate for young children; not adequate for teenagers



Top Five Recreational Needs

Facility Improvement Needs



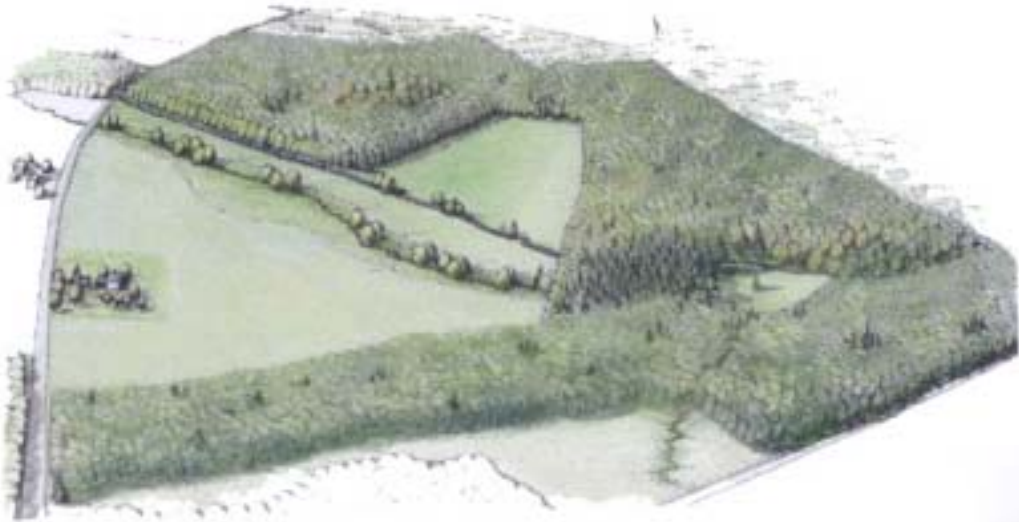
Conservation Options

- Conservation best accomplished with public and private involvement
 - Zoning options
 - Landowner donations
 - Donation, Bargain sale
 - Deed restrictions
 - Tax incentives
 - Outright purchase
 - Public & private
 - Local dedicated fund



Bylaws for Open Space & Natural Resources

- Incentives for open space protection
 - “Cluster” design
 - Low Impact Development design
- Wetland bylaws extending jurisdiction
- Uplands zoning
- Scenic Mountains Act



Site before development.

“Low Impact
Development”

“Cluster” or
“Open Space”
Development



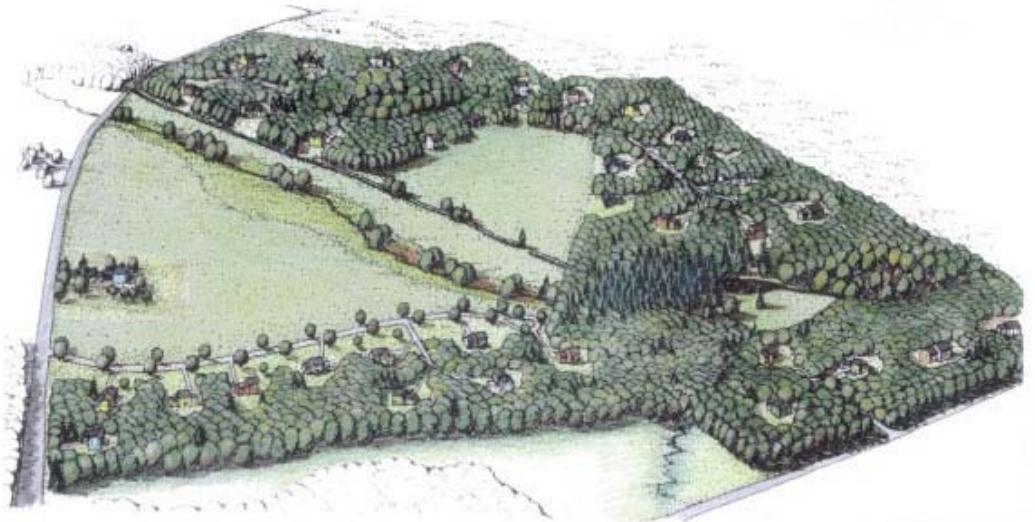
Identifying secondary conservation areas.

Preserve open space and forest habitat



Identifying potential development areas.

Improve this:
less houses in
forest to
preserve habitat



Site with conservation design.

Upland Zoning

- **Upland Zoning**

- Designate district & write bylaw
- Public hearing, 2/3 vote at Town Meeting,
- Attorney General approval
- Planning Board / ZBA is permitting authority
- Williamstown, Willbraham

- **Scenic Mountains Act**

- Delineate elevation
- Public hearing on delineation, 2/3 vote of Select Board
- Dept. of Conservation & Recreation approval (Attny Gen?)
- Conservation Commission is permitting authority
- Monterey, Richmond, Stockbridge

Deed Restrictions

Deed Restriction: A legally binding restriction on the use, activity, and/or limitation of property rights, recorded at the registry of deeds. Property ownership retained.

- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- Conservation Restriction
- Forest Legacy

Chapter 61 Tax Program

- Tax abatement program to ease burden of owning large open tracts of land
- Allows town 120-day Right of First Refusal

Purpose	Program	Eligibility	Tax Assessment
Timber production	Chapter 61	Min. 10 acres	5% fair market value
Agriculture	Chapter 61A	Min. 5 acres, min. annual gross sales \$500	"Agricultural" assessment, commercial rate
Recreation	Chapter 61B	Min 5 acres	Min. 25% fair market value, commercial rate

Community Preservation Act

- Surcharge on tax bill (not on property value)
- Three main focus areas
 - Open Space and Recreation
 - Historic buildings and landscapes
 - Affordable housing
- Min. of 10% of annual revenues -- dedicated to each of 3 main focus areas.
- Remaining 70% -- allocated as Town sees fit

Community Preservation Act

No Exemptions	CPA Tax for Residential Property Valued At:			
	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$500,000
<i>Surcharge</i>				
1%	\$16.94	\$33.88	\$50.82	\$84.70
2%	\$33.88	\$67.76	\$101.64	\$169.40
3%	\$50.82	\$101.64	\$152.46	\$254.10
\$100,000 Exempt				
<i>Surcharge</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>\$200,000</i>	<i>\$300,000</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>
1%	\$0.00	\$16.94	\$33.88	\$67.76
2%	\$0.00	\$33.88	\$67.76	\$135.52
3%	\$0.00	\$50.82	\$101.64	\$203.28

Surcharges	1.5% Surcharge	2% Surcharge	3% Surcharge
No Exemptions	\$105,984	\$141,311	\$211,967
First \$100,000 & low/mod	\$47,007	\$62,676	\$94,014
Commercial/Industrial	NA	NA	NA



Agricultural Preservation Restriction



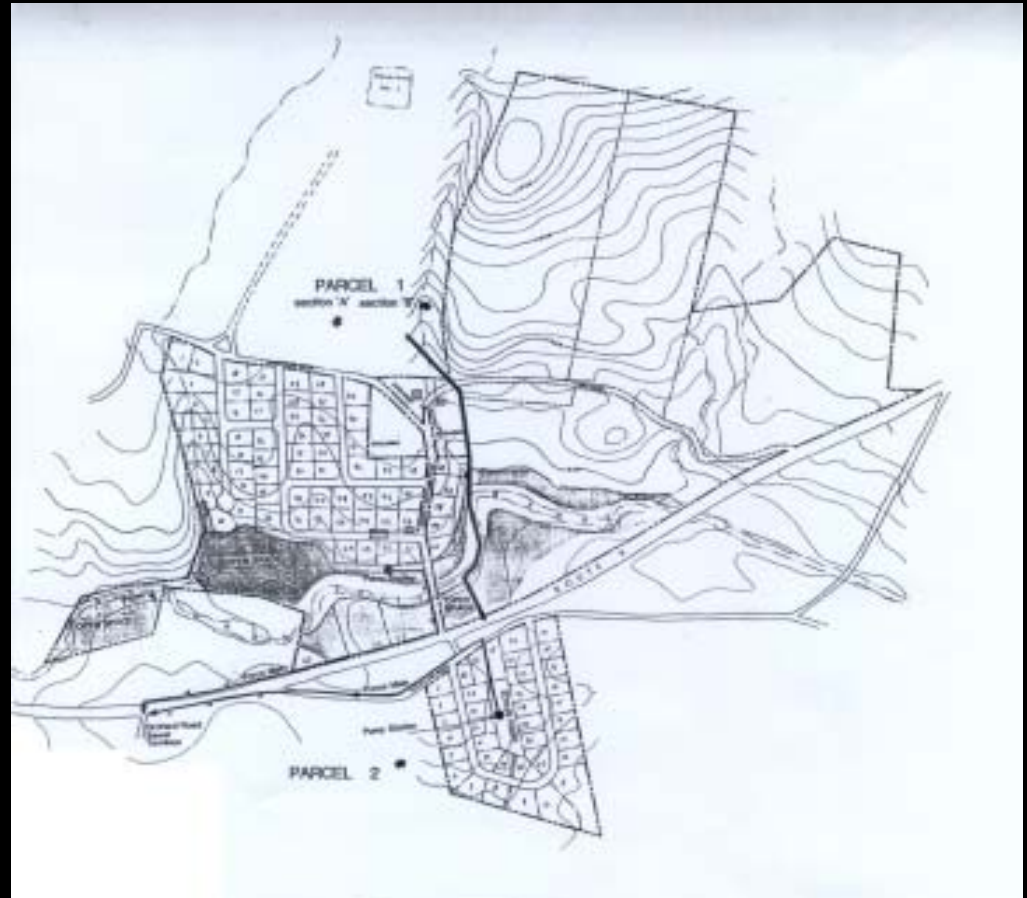
**Medium
Density
Buildout**



APR, cont.



High
Density
Build-out



Typical High-density Development





Historic Preservation: our Heritage



Existing Goals

- **Maintain and improve the quality of water resources and riparian habitat.**
- **Protect sensitive natural areas and resources such as mountain ridges, steep slopes, rare-species habitat, forested areas, and prime agricultural soils.**

Existing Goals, cont.

- **Preserve and support agricultural uses in order to maintain scenic areas, economic diversity and community character.**
- **Provide and maintain non-motorized outdoor recreation opportunities, including a linked system of accessible trails.**

We Want to Hear from You

- What are your main concerns regarding Dalton's changing landscape?
- What or where do you think is the most special place in Dalton?
- What conservation options might work best for Dalton?
- What do you feel is Dalton's greatest need regarding recreational opportunities?

Contact Us: the Open Space & Recreation Committee

- Stu Sargent, Chairman
- Peter Bacon, Co-chairman
- Tom Baker
- Dicken Crane
- Mary Lamke
- Dom Sacco
- Russ Sears
- Mary Walsh